



The Flaming Chalice

The newsletter of The Unitarian Universalist Community Church
69 Winthrop Street ~ PO Box 8 ~ Augusta, ME 04332-0008

Spring/Summer 2019

Sunday Worship Services at 9:15 & 11:00 A.M.

Looking Ahead at Sundays in our Community

May 5th

PeaceJam Service

Our youth group leads us and inspires us with their visions of a more equitable and just world community. Their year of advocacy, action, and community building is shared generously throughout the year then once again on this Sunday.

12:30 p.m. Finance 101: A Congregational Conversation

The UUCC finance committee and members of the Board of Trustees will share the draft budget and the process they engaged to bring a responsible faithful budget to the congregation.

May 12th

Coming-of-Age Service

Our coming-of-age youth share their inspirational credos (statements of belief) with the congregation. Their spiritual grounding and wisdom shine through brightly in this amazing service celebrating and marking the right-of-passage of our children into young adulthood.

Noon – Elder Lunch:

Join the church community for this FINAL Elder luncheon for this church year.

May 19th

9:15 Celebrating A Year in Religious Exploration

Crossing the bridge, blessing our new drivers, celebrating our graduating youth and sharing the ministry of the ages brings another beautiful religious exploration year to a close.

11:00 Let's Talk Opioids!

Courtney Allen, Executive Director and Founder of James' Place in Augusta joins Rev. Carie for an inspirational and compassionate conversation on the real impact of opiate use. Their perspectives as a person in recovery and impacted family member, respectively, offer insight on this health care issue impacting our entire community.

12:30 Forum on Opioids: A Compassionate Conversation

Courtney Allen, Jesse Harvey, Church of the Safe Injection, and a staff member of Health Equity Alliance will speak about the current situation of the Opioid Crisis and the health care response in our local communities here in Maine.

SHIFT TO ONE SERVICE AT 10:00 A.M.

May 26th Bearing Witness to the Ministerial Formation Journey Claire Curole

Raising up ministers in Unitarian Universalism is the work of a congregation. At the March Board meeting the UUCC Board of Trustees voted unanimously to co-ordain Claire Curole into Unitarian Universalist Ministry. It has been our honor and privilege to both witness and shape the formation of Claire's ministry in our wider movement. Please see her personal message in this newsletter.

June 2nd Annual Meeting As Spiritual Practice

The business of the church is as much a spiritual practice as anything we do on Sunday morning, or Tuesday night or Wednesday at noon. In this service the spiritual practice of church governance is a tangible expression of our faith.

UUCC children and youth are invited to join Monique for the annual trip to Vaughn Woods. They will leave from the church shortly after 10:00 a.m.

June 9th Flower Communion: Celebrating 10 Years of Shared Ministry

This year marks ten years of shared ministry. On May 17, 2009 the congregation voted and Rev. Carie answered the call to serve as UUCC's settled minister. In this multi-generational service will welcome our newest members as we celebrate and re-covenant together in our commitment to share the grace of Love rooted in Unitarian Universalism. Please bring perennials from your garden to plant in ours as a symbol of our shared ministry. We will close this year's Flower Communion with a garden party!

June 16th Traditional Sunday Service led by the Rev. Carie Johnsen

SHIFT TO LAY LED SERVICES

June 23rd to September 1st Inspired From Within UUCC Lay Leadership

While Rev. Carie continues to serve our community (with the exception of her July vacation) through pastoral care, justice leadership, committee and governance work, and program planning for the upcoming year, the multi-talented, wise, and generous leaders at UUCC share quality, creative, inspiring, and innovative Sunday services for those who gather in community and fellowship.

WE RETURN TO TWO SERVICES AT 9:15 AND 11:00

**September 8th Water Heal My Body, Water Heal My Soul Rev. Carie Johnsen
UUCC Choir and Orchestra**

September is In-gathering. We bring summer to a close with the returning of the wider congregation back home. Members and friends are encouraged to bring a small vial of water from a summer sojourn to this annual Water Communion service. This joyful high-energy service calls us home with the ritual blending of waters symbolizing the diversity and beauty of a community gathered as one in covenant with each other.

A Faith Journey...

And, as they breathed together, they were a magnificent and powerful conspiracy.

Ten years ago this May, we entered candidating week with great enthusiasm. I was a newly ordained minister in search of a congregation. Unitarian Universalist Community Church was a thriving community in search of a minister. At the end of a very full and engaged week, you all voted to call me as your settled minister; I answered the call with an resounding Yes!

As we prepare to bring to close the tenth year of our shared ministry, I look back with awe and forward with aspirations. On that auspicious day, May 17, 2009, I preached the sermon "Conspiracy Theories." I offered this reading:

Today I took a long walk. The wind was warm and wholehearted making me push energetically against it as I walked. To my great surprise, when I passed a towering pine tree, all the wind on the ground suddenly stilled. The only wind I heard was the wind whistling and singing high up in the swaying, green branches of the old tree. Harmony and melody. The tree and the wind were in concert. And, as they breathed together, they were a magnificent and powerful conspiracy. ~ Stephanie West Adam, titled, "news flash: Tree and Wind conspire"¹

For the past ten years we have breathed life into this thing called shared ministry. We have been the tree and the wind whistling and singing high both harmony and melody. We have served the grace of Love and grown together.

Our shared ministry has

- been strengthened by this congregation's commitment to strive toward healthy systems and transparent governance.
- thrived even as we have made mistakes or maybe because we have made mistakes and owned our foibles.
- grown a vibrant music program that enriches our Sunday morning services, deepens the message, and weaves the spirit of community together.
- cultivated quality, creative, and innovative Sunday services through the traditional formats, congregational sharing, ritual, and faithful risking on what it means to be together in exploration of that which matters most.
- continued to celebrate the blessings of a multigenerational congregation. Striving to be relevant in a time when fewer families and children arrive in the pews, we have creatively experimented with ways to nurture the spiritual lives of children and youth.
- honored and celebrated the wisdom and presence of our elders through luncheons, ritual, and croning.
- brought a presence of Unitarian Universalist legislative ministry into the wider Augusta community and connected the twenty two Unitarian Universalist congregations in Maine.

¹ Adapted from *Grand Conspiracy* by Stephanie West Allen.

www.streetdirectory.com/travel_guide/107459/motivatin/a_grand_conspiracy.html

Together, we *breathed together a magnificent and powerful conspiracy*. In a time when the average ministry is 6-8 years, we have reached the rare milestone of ten years. It is time to rejoice! Mark your calendars now for our 10th Annual Flower Communion. On June 9th we will bring our church year to a close, welcome our newest members, and celebrate our transformative ministry. Together we have transformed lives, shared the blessing of Unitarian Universalism, and brought a bold revolutionary Love to an aching and joyful universe. It is time to rejoice!

I said it ten years ago, and it still rings true today, "In a world of options, I choose us! There is no one I would rather conspire with in Love, Life and Justice."

May our covenant to conspire continue!

In faith, Rev. Carie Johnsen

Announcing a NEW Justice Ministry Program to be launched September 2019.

ROOTS AND WINGS

Affirming, supporting, equipping, and sustaining Unitarian Universalist justice leaders in congregations and community organizations.

Roots and wings is a new two-year lay justice ministry program that supports, trains, and equips Unitarian Universalists to engage their deepest passions and convictions in the call to *creating a more just and equitable world community*. This multi-congregational and organizational program offers emerging and long-standing Unitarian Universalist justice advocates the opportunity to transform their gifts and commitments into spiritual leadership. In a supportive peer learning environment participants better understand the source of their call and ground their vision in Unitarian Universalist principles and values.

Following the small group ministry model of intimacy, ultimacy, and service, Roots and Wings facilitates a guided and intentional process of spiritual reflection by 1) connecting justice leaders together to reflect upon and identify their gifts, grow in spirit, and engage their call to justice making (intimacy); 2) fostering in participants a relationship with what/who calls them and sustains them in the long haul journey of justice making (ultimacy); and leadership development by 3) equipping passionate leaders through training and education to serve and inspire others to engage in advocacy, action, and witness (service).

At the close of year Unitarian Universalist Community Church will commission participants to be lay Justice Ministers. In the Act of Commission, Roots and Wings recognizes justice ministry is more than working on a cause, it is a call - an inherent gift of passion, conviction, and leadership. In the Act of Commission we affirm a person's specific call as a justice minister, commit to support their vision of justice making, and charge the justice minister to go forth to engage, inspire, and lead.

This program will launch in September 2019. To learn more about Roots and Wings: pick up a program prospectus in the vestibule of the church or contact Rev. Carie at 207-623-3663 or revcariejohansen@gmail.com.

Announcing 2019-20 Themes!

What does it mean to be a people of...

September: Expectation	February: Resilience
October: Belonging	March: Wisdom
November: Attention	April: Liberation
December: Awe	May: Thresholds
January: Integrity	June: Play



Message from the President, UCC Board of Trustees

After this long winter, I'm sure you are excited for the start of spring as much as I am. The beginning of spring always reminds me of new starts and fresh beginnings. Over the past two years, your board has been working on a new policy to help guide us concerning political activity conducted on church grounds. The reason for this new policy is to ensure that we have a church that is inclusive and in covenantal community with each other. To be in covenantal community with each other is to recognize that it is not always about the individual but it's about what's best for the congregation as a whole. We want to ensure that our sanctuary space remains sacred and a place of worship without distractions or misunderstandings. In addition, we want to ensure that we stay within compliance rules of our tax exemption status (501C), which states that a church can endorse issues but not specific candidates.

To make sure that the congregation has an opportunity to look at the draft policy and give input, we will be holding two listening circles. These meetings will occur on Thursday, May 2 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. and on Wednesday May 8th from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Both meetings will be held in the Robbins Room. If you can't attend either of these meetings, please talk with me (623-4537 or Jillwatson223@gmail.com), Debbie Mattson, Committee on Ministry (DebbieMattson@hotmail.com or 557-2697) or Karen Foust, Board Vice President (KarmaFoust@gmail.com or 441-8971). We look forward to hearing from everyone about the proposed policy to ensure that we remain in covenantal community with each other. A copy of the DRAFT UCC Political Policy follows this message.

As spring becomes in full bloom, we also are in the "blooming" stages of developing our annual budget. In order to help the congregation understand the process of our budget development, we are going to hold another congregational meeting on Sunday, May 5 @ 12:15pm in the sanctuary (right after 2nd service). We will have members from the Committee on Ministry, the Treasurer and the chair from the Stewardship Committee to help answer any and all questions related to our annual budget.

Over the past two months, we have welcomed three new board members to serve out terms that were vacant due to unforeseen events from those past board members. Welcome Ida Gammon, Kevin Kane & Oliver Gottlieb. Also, a HUGE thank you to Martha Naber & Liza Gottlieb for your extraordinary work as co-chairs for the Stewardship Drive and to Janine Bonk for all your fabulous work at chairing the Auction, which was a glowing success. As board President, I want to say Thank You to all who make our church a glowing beacon of respect, hope and tolerance in the larger Augusta area.

Peace,

Jill Watson, Board President

DRAFT – UUCC Political Policy

In accordance with the Fifth UU Principle*, we encourage members and the congregational community as a whole to be active participants in the democratic process. As a “capital city” congregation, the UUCCA is proud to involve itself in legislative advocacy on issues central to our faith and principles. UUCCA will also support or oppose key ballot initiatives, in coalition with others, including, but not limited to, through: signature collection, advocacy communications, fundraising activities or volunteerism. We rely on the minister and Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) to make decisions on which issues, bills or measures are timely priorities and align with UU values.

By federal law, the UUCCA may not support or oppose candidates for elected office or political parties. Doing so would jeopardize the church’s tax-exempt status and therefore its continued existence. The church will not allow church property or church sanctioned events to be used to support or oppose candidates, including, but not limited to: fundraising, signature collection, distribution of campaign materials or “announcements” or expressions by service leaders which state or imply favoritism of any candidate or party. Any questions about whether any activity constitutes church involvement in electoral politics should be directed to the minister or Board chair. This is not meant to limit the right of all individuals in our community to express their own support for or opposition to candidates or parties (This includes the minister, who must take special care to ensure her or his activities or statements are not construed as representing the congregation as a whole.)

We strongly encourage all members of the community to uphold the highest standards of civility and empathy in engaging in political dialogue, recognizing the potential of politics to divide. Political dialogue in our community should embody the UU principles of mutual respect, compassion, acceptance, and our shared learning experience. Above all the UUCCA aspires to democratic practices where more unites us than divides us, reflecting our common humanity and mutual interdependence.

*Fifth UU Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

Finance 101

In order to help the congregation understand the process of our budget development, we are going to hold a congregational meeting on Sunday, May 5 @ 12:15pm in the sanctuary (right after 2nd service). We will have members from the Board, Committee on Ministry, the Treasurer and the chair of the Stewardship Committee to help answer any and all questions related to our annual budget. We value your participation in this process as we work hard to meet the needs of the congregation while striving to be fiscally responsible. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

- Jill Watson, Board president

Finance 101

May 5th after 2nd service.

How do we ensure financial stability for the church while upholding our spiritual values?

Do you have questions about

- how the church budget is developed,
- how we are doing financially, and/or
- how spending decisions are made?

Come and hear from the experts.

Members of the Board of Trustees and the Committee on Ministry as well as our Treasurer and the Chair of the Stewardship Committee and Finance Committee members will be present to discuss the budget process and answer any questions you may have.



THE UUCC SPRING COMMUNITY CONCERT SUNDAY, MAY 5TH AT 4PM!



The UCCOO and choir will be celebrating their season in music with the community on Sunday, May 5th at 4pm. This one-hour program will feature music by: Vivaldi, Esenvalds, Kondo, Gjeilo, Barnwell, Bernstein, Baier, and Mozart. From Norway to Japan, America to Italy...we have it covered! We will feature guest soloist Torrey Gimpel, soprano; and our own UCCOO member, Joan Atkinson, violin!

This concert will be followed by a light reception in the Fellowship Hall. A freewill offering will be accepted at the door. Join us! Invite your friends and family! For more information contact: musicdirector@augustauu.org.

Community Connections

UUCU offers a variety of opportunities for interested people to connect with other community members to learn, to grow, to serve.

CAPITAL AREA NEW MAINERS PROJECT (CANMP) is a cross-cultural organization that welcomes immigrants and works to create a thriving, integrated, multicultural community in central Maine. There are many ways to get involved and help support this group's mission. FMI: <https://www.newmainersproject.org/>

EARTH CIRCLES AND SABBATS celebrate earth-based and goddess traditions. Circles meet monthly, Sunday, Noon-2pm. Sabbats or earth festivals, occur at differing times.

CRAFT CIRCLE meets the 4th Wednesday of the month from 2:00 until 4:00 in Fellowship Hall. Bring your own project and join a friendly circle for conversation.

ELDER LUNCH happens on the second Sunday of each month between October and June. Volunteers serve lunch to self selected 'elders' meaning all are welcome. A chance to enjoy a meal and good company and/or a chance to volunteer to offer food, help set-up, serve or clean up.

GENTLE YOGA is a physical practice that makes us stronger and more flexible by helping us to link our mind, body and breath. No experience needed; just curiosity. Classes are free and are taught by Debbie Mattson on Wednesdays from 5 PM to 6 PM in the Fellowship Hall. We have extra mats, blocks, and bolsters—everything needed for Wednesday Yoga.

MUUSAN is the Maine Unitarian Universalist Social Advocacy Network. The group brings the voice of UU churches across the state to the legislature. FMI: visit the website at www.MUUSAN.org.

PEACEFUL HEART SANGHA is a mindful meditation group that meets in the Sanctuary weekly on Monday's from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. All are welcome to join this group.

PEER RUN AFFINITY GROUP is a support group for those that struggle with mood disorders and their families and friends. The group meets **every Thursday from 1:30 to 3pm in Robbins Room at the Church**. Attend this confidential group to learn the useful **facts** and to dispel the harmful **myths** about mood disorders. Meets year round.

SEASONED SOULS is a group of older church members and friends (65+) that meet to talk openly about topics related to the aging process. The group meets the 2nd & 4th Wed. of each month in the Fellowship Hall as a study/support group.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY refers to groups of up to 10 people who commit to meeting regularly for spiritual exploration, ministry to one another and to the church and the wider community.

READ, LEARN, SHARE is for devoted readers who enjoy book discussions. We meet (Oct. – June) on the first Thursday of the month from 1:00-2:30 downstairs in the Drew House. Join us at one or all discussions.

Current information about any of these activities is available on our web site at www.augustauu.org. Information is also published in the weekly E-blast and the Announcements insert in the Sunday morning Order of Service.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, contact of Office Administrator at 622-3232 or via email at admin@augustauu.org.

GODDESS/EARTH CIRCLES—



NEWSLETTER; GODDESS/EARTH CIRCLES — May 2019

Our sessions for January and February were not held as scheduled due to weather, so parts of those sessions comprised our March 24 session, “From Winter to Spring.” We created Brigid’s crosses as we considered the cycle of the seasons, with the following explanation. The four arms of the cross represent the solstices and the equinoxes. We called these “absolutes” measuring the amount of light in a day and signifying the change in the amount of that light. The space between these parts of the cross we called the “interludes” or the times of transformation: Imbolc with the awakening from winter, Beltane moving toward the fullness of life, Lammas with the awareness of harvest and beginning to let go, and Samhain with focus on life and death and the rest and generation. The cross is a spiritual and religious symbol over many centuries.

On **April 28** and **May 19**, noon-2pm in the Fellowship Hall, we will focus on Native/Indigenous traditions. *Phyllis Cudmore* will lead the sessions as we reflect on the deep connections with the earth, including animal totems, specific goddesses, and earth spirits.

We suggest attending nearby Beltane celebrations.

May 4, Saturday 4 pm! Beltane by the Evergreen Grove and the UUCW Worship Committee, at 528 Plains Rd, Readfield.

May 5, Beltane In past years some of us have gone to Beltane at Popham Beach.

FMI: <http://beltaneonthebeach.org/>

Our summer sessions (**June 23, July 28, August 25**) are Summer Connections with a focus on sharing our experiences and spiritual significance of this time of year. These are held after the service and Fellowship Hour, either around the picnic table (weather permitting) or in the Fellowship Hall.

The brochure for Circles and Sabbats has been revised and is available in the vestibule, and on the UUCW website (www.augustauu.org, Church Life, Goddess/Earth Circles). Please especially note our activities for the fall, including Women of Wisdom/Croning events.

For more information about Goddess/Earth Circles, contact Helen Zidowecki, hzmre@hzmre.com or 582-5308.

Winter Wonderland Church Fair 2019 Update and Requests

2019 Church Fair Planning Begins

As we watch the coming of spring and the end of the snow, some of us are already planning and working toward the Winter Wonderland 2019 church fair! Last year’s Holiday Fair was a fun community building event in addition to being a successful fund raiser for UUCW. Nancy Fritz and Martha Naber have agreed to chair this event again.

It is not too early to think of how you can be involved. This year’s Holiday Fair is scheduled for Saturday Dec. 7. As you traverse the months before that day, give a thought to how you can contribute to the success of the fair. Maybe you will see an item somewhere that you think we could reproduce for one of the fair tables. Pass on ideas to others who might recreate them with you. Maybe you will preserve special pickles or jams and jellies to contribute. We will not have Hannah’s Boutique, but we will have a space to offer those gently used, repurposed items that she so lovingly sold for so many years. A new area will offer sustainable, recycling products such as grocery bags, lunch bags, pet toys and other items.

The craft circle which meets on the fourth Wed. of each month from 2-4 pm in Fellowship Hall helped with organizing and planning and readying items for the fair. Join them to be involved along the way to Dec.

After the fair was “put to bed” for 2018 evaluations were received from many who helped in some fashion. Based on these evaluations, we plan to have music for set up times! We hope to offer massages to workers setting up the church. We will continue to have lunch for set up workers. We will continue to rent spaces for private vendors. We will continue to advertise the event widely.

We hope you will choose to be involved in some manner in this day of fun and fundraising for UUC! See you there.

Small Group Ministry Updates



For facilitators and SGM members alike, please note that the May 5 Leadership Meeting has been cancelled. A new date for this event will be announced soon. The Leadership Meeting is of great value and importance for the committee as we can assess the state of this great program and introduce new ideas and initiatives. And as for the facilitators and members, the meeting is a reminder that the groups are an important part of the UUC's ministry.

During the upcoming Leadership Meeting, we'll discuss where the groups are standing with their service projects. One of the vital components of our SGM program is its commitment to returning to the church community some sort of effort to enrich our congregation.

Another extremely important feature of this upcoming meeting will be to begin to formulate a plan to connect SGM here with our friends from Wales. Alun Dafis' visit this past fall was a powerful reminder that UUs are everywhere and to share the blessings and promise of SGM to his congregants there.

We will also bring attendees up to date on Starting Point, the new program designed to welcome newcomers to the UUC. It has been a great success so far and it is hoped that some participants will be interested in furthering their connections with the church through SGM.

We look forward to seeing you when this event is rescheduled!

If you are interested in joining a small group, or starting a new group, please contact Michael Conley at 248-7941 or e-mail Reiter/Conley (estherpearl67@gmail.com). Other members of the Small Group Ministry Committee are Judy Gallant, Linda Findlay and Rev. Helen Zidowecki.

New groups and new members are welcomed with open arms.
You may find that a small group is an important addition to your life.

AND NOW... some words from a couple of our Small Group LEADERS:

In 2010 I joined Terry Cookson's newly forming small group and have been an enthusiastic member ever since. In 2018, when Terry moved on to other responsibilities, I became the leader of our group. For years we had met twice a month on a weekday evening. Last fall our members decided that due to work schedules, we would meet once a month on Thursday evenings in the Robbins Room from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The seven of us now include Charlene Cleven, Marilyn Gordon, Carolyn Ladd, Sunshine Perlis, Rachel Small, Jill Watson, and myself.

Each meeting begins with a reading and a chalice lighting. After the chalice is lit, each member checks in for a few minutes of personal revelation. It is here that we share with one another compelling details of our lives, knowing that what we tell will be held in confidence by the other members. After the sharing, often an hour long, is complete, the facilitator opens the discussion topic of the evening.

From the Small Group Ministry Committee we have received a book of 110 topics and session plans among which to choose. Many of these topics were written by Rev. Helen Zidowecki and other members of our church. We also have chosen topics from the *Soul Matters* newsletter that Rev. Carie used to publish. In addition, we are free to choose our own topics.

Each group sets up its own covenant and rules. In ours, the facilitators rotate. My last turn as facilitator was Thursday, March 21, the first day of Spring. I led a discussion based on the session plan "Taking Stock"--what the beginning of this spring means to us individually and spiritually, and how the group is supporting our hopes.

Do contact Michael Conley as listed above to explore what meaning a UUCC small group can have in your own life.

Sincerely,

Hannah Faulkner

Small Group Ministry - Susan Shaw and Friends

Our gang of 8 continues to meet on a monthly basis, usually on either a Friday evening for a shared meal and fellowship or occasionally on a Saturday afternoon for lunch or a movie followed by pizza.

Once the weather is a bit warmer we will add outdoor venues such as Lovejoy Pond and Five Islands. We enjoyed putting together a Made in Maine basket for the Holiday Fair, hosting an elder luncheon and providing refreshments and people power for fellowship hour.

Our group uses some of the suggested session plans as well as topics of our own. Being together on a regular basis fosters a sense of camaraderie and reinforces our connectedness and support for one another, especially during difficult times. It is a place of acceptance where we are comfortable expressing our thoughts, opinions and feelings, knowing that we are accepted and valued for who we are.

History Committee

In compiling the publication *25 Years at UUCC* for distribution at the Annual Meeting in June 2018, the reports since consolidation in 1992 were organized by the committees. This provides accessible information by specific area of church life over the years.

We are in the process of refining the organization of historical material for UUCC from two perspectives. First is the ongoing Annual Report and other standard reports, orders of service, newsletters, etc., that are filed by date (year). Second is organized by program areas, including Annual Reports and other information. These would be quick resources for the people interested in specific areas, including people interested in leadership in a particular area. We look forward to adding the Annual Reports for 2019 to our historical treasures. This is a way to record our history as we make it!

There are still parts of the history started last year to be compiled. We would welcome help in this endeavor. Contact Helen Zidowecki (hzmre@hzmre.com, 582-5308) or put a note in the History Committee mail slot in the Committee Room if you would like to help. Thank you.

History Committee Members: Heide Munro, Helen McKendry, Helen Zidowecki

Discernment Committee Update

The Discernment Committee has spent much time gathering people's feedback on the changes to the sanctuary, discussing the comments and moving thoughtfully toward making a recommendation to the Board. Reactions to the removal of the pews have been mainly positive with the caveat that some pews remain in the sanctuary for those who prefer sitting in the back or on the edges and for those who simply prefer sitting on the pews. Although the placement of the chairs in a circle presented some challenges logistically for the worship leader, many liked the intimacy that it created once they settled in to it.

Following are some of the comments made regarding chairs versus pews and the placement of the chairs in a more circular type setup:

- loved seeing faces and feeling together
- Very disconcerting at first. It quickly grew on me
- It felt like we were all connected
- It felt more inclusive, comfortable
- Peaceful, healing
- Felt more connected to the community in church
- Felt too foreign
- It seemed intimate in the circle but the rest of us weren't part of the intimacy
- Miss having pews - feel like there should at least be a couple of pews toward the back for those who like the stability and comfort of the pews.

When the chairs were placed facing forward the comments were more focused on the familiarity of the setup and there was comfort in that. There were also comments that it did not feel as inclusive and was more separate. There was also a comment that the pews are more comfortable and there is more legroom with them.

From this feedback the Discernment Committee has pondered a recommendation to the Board on how to set up the default arrangement for the furniture in the sanctuary so that the worship environment reflects the congregation's desire for community and intimacy while providing a variety of space that is welcoming and inclusive to those who find comfort in the pews and those who prefer a little more personal space. The overall results of our discussion have led us to the decision that the chairs offer much more flexibility in the way that the sanctuary is set up for worship. Many of the pews are showing signs of significant wear and some have become unsafe.

Our recommendation is that three rows of pews would remain in the back of the sanctuary and that two sets of pews would remain along the outer walls of the sanctuary. Chairs would be set up in the center of the sanctuary with the configuration of the chairs to be decided by the worship leader in any given week. We acknowledge that there are some who prefer pews and that this recommendation may not completely satisfy everyone's preference. Through much discussion however, we have come to realize that the sense of community and intimacy that can be provided with different seating configurations is valuable, and that the use of pews does not offer the flexibility to support that need which has been expressed by many.

The Committee is currently researching different church governance structures and speaking with other church communities to gather information on how their communities have found ways to do the church's business that support the values, energy and mission of their community. Given all of the wisdom and feedback from our own community regarding what keeps us coming to Church we are also working toward crafting a mission and vision statement for the UUC of Augusta that is succinct and which captures the essence of our community and helps to inform future decisions. Stay tuned....

Karen Foust, Debbie Mattson, Erin Ballew, Catherine Emery, Claire Curole, Annie Voorhees, Rev. Carie and Gary Chapin

A Message from Claire Curole

What a change a few short weeks makes! When I originally drafted this article for the mistaken newsletter deadline last month, the ground outside my house was still under two feet of ice. But now what has been frozen is beginning to thaw, grow and move! Spring is a time of fast-moving transformation and new things taking root.

I am grateful and humbled to share that at their March meeting the governing board of our congregation agreed to my request for ordination. Our congregation will join my internship church, the UU Church of Brunswick (Maine) whose board met the same week. We are planning to hold the service in mid-October, to allow planning and organization time and the use of Brunswick's building (as our sanctuary is a little too cozy for both congregations at once!)

There is no hurry - except, of course, that ordination is exciting and an affirmation of the ministry in which I already serve. The UUA is our association of *congregations*, and the fellowship process I've completed is considered proper preparation for one entering the Unitarian Universalist ministry, but not every UU minister serves in a congregation.

Those ministers who serve outside the congregational setting - in military, health care, correctional or educational institutions as chaplains; seminary professors and public advocates; writers, teachers and consultants; and too many other vocations to list - are often called "community" ministers. Our work is to live and serve from the values of Unitarian Universalism out there in the rest of the world.

The current form my ministry takes is chaplaincy. I continue to serve part-time at Maine Medical Center (in Portland) and later this spring I will begin another part-time chaplain position at Mount St. Joseph's residential facility in Waterville. From time to time I also serve as a guest preacher in other congregations, mostly here in Maine, and I will be leading worship here at UUCC on May 26th, Memorial Day weekend.

UUCC of Augusta is where I learned Unitarian Universalism, and I am still, always, grateful for this congregation to return home to on Sunday morning - even when I've just come off work Saturday night. This winter I've returned to singing with the choir and am realizing how important that was and how much I've missed being able to do it.

Connection to a living, vibrant UU congregation is important to me, grounding my ministry "out there" in our community "in here."

Thank you all –

Claire Curole

A Message from David Rand

I went to my very first Northern New England District (NNED) meeting. The meeting is like a smaller UUA General Assembly event where churches get together to vote for the Board for next year. I enjoyed when this minister told his story with songs of joy and freedom. Some of us learned about vision and direction of congregational life.

This was a wonderful experience and I feel that more people should learn about how our district is run by attending this important event..

-- David Rand

UUA General Assembly

General Assembly is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Participants engage in conversations about our purpose as a faith community. General Assembly 2019 (June 19-23) with the theme “The Power of We” will take place in Spokane, WA, and online. There will be four hours of Business meeting, with other planned and focused discussions, workshops and a variety of other activities.

There are several ways to bring GA to UUCC, in addition to attending in person.

First, *events are streamed live* with video and online chat for everyone so we could have events available through live streaming (times listed here are Pacific time) or adjust viewing times to meet our needs. Events include but are not limited to:

Wednesday, June 19 Welcoming Celebration 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Worship and celebration that includes a procession of banners from hundreds of UU congregations and organizations.

Thursday, June 20 Service of the Living Tradition 7:00 – 8:30 p.m., Honor religious leaders remembering those who have died, completed active service, or received fellowship or credentialed status. The Rev. Lindi Ramsden, founder of the UU Justice Ministry of California and on the faculty of Starr King School for the Ministry, will preach.

Friday, June 21 Ware Lecture 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. by Richard Blanco, the gay Cuban-American poet who wrote “One Today” for President Obama’s second inauguration in 2013 and whose book *How To Love a Country* is forthcoming

Sunday, June 23 Sunday Morning Worship Sunday Morning Worship 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. This is the largest annual gathering of UUs joining in worship, with The Rev. Marta I. Valentín, minister of the UU Church of Medford, Massachusetts, poet, and counselor at Harvard Divinity School, as preacher.

Second, *off-site registration* is available (\$160 until April 30 and \$185 thereafter).

Off-site registrants are able to:

- listen to the mini assemblies on the proposed bylaw amendments and the proposed Congregational Study Action Issues (move about this below). Delegates will be able to propose amendments.
- live-cast select workshops and business sessions.
- watch all events that happen in the General Session Hall: worships, business meetings, and the Ware Lecture.

Delegates will be able to participate in debates and vote in business sessions.

Third, delegates are expected to consider a draft of the Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI) for 2016-2020, Statement of Conscience, “*Democracy Uncorrupted.*” We might want to have a discussion at UUCC in May – see <https://www.uua.org/action/process/csais/corruption-of-our-democracy/2016-2020-csai> to view the CSAI. A discussion would include orientation to the process of Congregational Study Action Issues using Small Group Ministry or similar format.

I have been a delegate from UUCC to GA for several years and would like the congregation to be more connected with the work of the UUA. I am registered for GA 2019 but may change from attending to participating off-site. I hope that others may attend or be off-site delegates. Delegates are selected by the UUCC Board.

For more information on GA, see <https://www.uua.org/ga>
General Assembly next year is June 24 – 28, 2020 in Providence, RI.

Helen Zidowecki

UUCC Annual Report

Each May an Annual Report is distributed to the congregation. The Annual Report gives a snap shot of the congregation at the end of the church fiscal year in reports from the Minister, staff, Clerk, Board of Trustees, Treasurer, and committees. The report also includes election information, financial information and our UUCC by-laws. This format reflects a time when the work of the congregation was primarily done by the Board, staff, and committees whose chairs were on the Board.

Our structure has changed. The Board has an identity and role of its own, separate from Committee Chairs. Both the Board and the committee chairs are expected to submit reports. However, a number of the ministries and activities of the community are outside the committee structure. *The Communications Work Group suggests that there be a section of the Annual Report to include reports from other areas of church life.* Reports from Peaceful Heart Sangha and Goddess/Earth Circles have been included for several years, and others that hold ministries or host events are encouraged to submit reports.

The Communications Work Group invites reports from other parts of church life. For example, reports have been included from Peaceful Heart Sangha and Goddess/Earth Circles for several years. The individual reports are due to be submitted to the Office Administrator (Font: Ariel 11), by **Monday, May 13th**.

The importance of Annual Reports cannot be overstated. The Annual Report is an historical document as well as an invitation to be part of the work of this faith community. The Annual Report reflects commitment to UUCC and its work, the celebration of those who have been involved, and a way of capturing our history as we move into the future. Annual Reports were a major source of information for “*25 years at UUCC*” (the twenty-five year history of Unitarian Universalist Community Church) that was prepared for the 2018 Annual Meeting.

As you are preparing your report, please include the focus and activities for the past year and hopes for the upcoming year. You may find it helpful to consider the congregational goals that were adopted in 2014:

(Sustainability) "We are a congregation where the sustainability of the congregations' time, talent, and treasure are intentionally balanced within the spectrum of church activities, faith formation, worship, and governance."

(Inspiring and Engaging) "We are a People of Faith who intentionally, courageously, and creatively engage our membership and our community. We seek to inspire and be inspired."

(Interconnectedness) "We are an interconnected community committed to age diversity and family ministry."

(Communication) "We are a congregation that is transparent in its decisions and actions. We strive for communication that is abundant, clear, compassionate, and inclusive."

The Annual Report will be available to the congregation at least 10 days before the Annual Meeting (June 2), or during the week of May 19. The Annual Report will be posted on the website, sent by email to our members and friends, and a few printed copies will be available. Please read this valuable resource and come to the Annual Meeting with gratitude and celebration.

Communications Work Group Members: Kathy Kellison, Helen Zidowecki, Lynn Smith

The Communications Work Group meets monthly. If you have comments or suggestions or have a matter you would like considered, please contact Lynn Smith (admin@augustauu.org or 207-622-3232)

Starting Point: Exploring your UU Journey

STARTING POINT: EXPLORING YOUR UU JOURNEY

January saw the launch of an exciting new program that was introduced to newcomers here at UUCC. The series focused on small group experiences with a four part mission:

- 1) Explore your spiritual journey and share it with others.
- 2) Learn more about our church and Unitarian Universalism.
- 3) Arrive at a clear understanding of UU theology and history.
- 4) Find your place in the life of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church.

This program was a joint effort of the Membership and Small Group Ministry committees. We used the Small Group Ministry process in the sessions to provide an experience of the potential of this ministry in our congregation. Each session followed Elder Lunch (nurture your body and then nurture your soul!!). Before each session, 'homework' was assigned in the form of readings and videos which expanded on the topic of the session.

- **The first session** involved getting acquainted and using small groups of four or five to share the religious and spiritual histories of each .
- **The second session** included help from our History committee to explore the history of Unitarianism, Universalism and Unitarian Universalism. We showed how our local history mirrored the national movements from separation from earlier institutions to independence to merger.
- **The third session** introduced Small Group Ministry more deliberately as we discussed deep listening and the practice that leads to successful Small Groups.
- **The fourth session** will pull together our learning and point forward to connect people with Small Group Ministry or some other ministry within our community that calls to them.

If you are interested in joining us for the last Starting Point session in May, you are more than welcome to attend! FMI or to attend in May, please contact Michael Conley at estherpearl67@gmail.com or call him at 248-7941. All are welcome and we'd love to have you join us! We hope to repeat this series during the next church year.

Newcomer News

Attention anyone who has discovered our community within the last year. We are planning some events before the end of the church year in June.

If you have decided you are ready to take the step of becoming an official member, welcome! Please set up an appointment with Rev. Carie (minister@uuccaug.org) or Kathy Kellison (kell6787@gmail.com) to discuss your decision and to sign the Membership Book. This is a wonderful time to be considering membership because the Annual Meeting of the church is set for June 2. Becoming a member now will mean that you will be able to vote on next year's budget, the slate of officers to run the church, and any other business the board announces.

Any of you who has become a member since last spring will be welcomed to the church at the 11:00 service on June 9. This annual celebration of Flower Communion and community seems the perfect time to introduce new members and the vitality you bring to our community.

And finally, whether or not you are on the path of membership, you will be invited to a dinner in your honor prepared by the Membership Committee. You will have an opportunity to connect with others who have been exploring UUCC over the past year and enjoy an evening of fellowship prepared just for you. Watch for your invitation over the next few weeks to learn all of the details!

Kathy Kellison, Chair of the Membership Committee

Tomato Adoption Day is May 19th

Dale's tomato seedlings will be on sale at coffee hour on May 19th. All proceeds go to the church so please plan on getting your tomatoes from the UUCC. There are all colors and sizes, early, midseason and late. Lovingly raised for you. Basil seedlings will also be on sale. A full list of the seedlings with photos and descriptions is on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Regular Size	Red	Yellow		Green	Striped
	Oregon Spring New Girl Early Girl Speckled Siberian	Valencia		Malakhite Box	Berkley Tie Dye Striped German
Cherry	Red	Yellow	Purple/DeepRed	Green	
	Sweet 100 Juliet	Jaune Flamme	Black cherry		

Current Budget Process at UUCC

As I write this UUCC is wrapping up the 2019-2020 pledge campaign to help fund the vision and mission of the church. It may feel like an isolated element of church life, but really it is only one of many efforts to help support the church and all its work. The fiscal year for UUCC is July 1-June 30.

A summary of the year long process follows.

- Starting in February and March of each year, requests are sent to all committees to set a desired amount of money to be put into the budget for programming for the next fiscal year.
- These figures are sent to the church treasurer to begin to draft a budget for the next fiscal year. The treasurer uses figures from this current year's expenditures and anticipated expenses to aid in this draft.
- Draft budget goes to the finance committee in April for discussion and review.
- Draft budget sent to the Board in April for initial discussion. Extra meetings are scheduled as needed to work on budget. An all church finance information session **may** be scheduled for initial discussion of the budget. This year's Finance 101 event will be held on May 5th.
- In May the draft budget is voted on by the board. Final adjustments are made based on anticipated income for the next fiscal year.
- The budget approved by the board is sent to the annual meeting (this year - June 2nd) to be voted on by the congregation. A quorum of church members is required to pass the budget.
- On July 1 the new budget takes effect as the new fiscal year begins.

If you have questions about UUCC finances please speak to a board member or finance committee member. Church finances involve each one of us. -----Martha Naber, Co-Chair Stewardship

Unitarian Universalist Community Church
P.O. Box 8
Augusta, Maine 04332-0008

Newsletter Submissions

Submission Deadline for FALL newsletter is August 19th

Submissions received after this date may not be able to be published.

Please submit all articles as an attachment in a Word document using Arial font size 11. Don't forget to give your article a title and sign it. Send an email to newsletter@augustauu.org with the article as a word attachment! ***Photos of church activities welcome! *** You will receive a confirmation e-mail of receipt of your submission.

Minister: Reverend Carie Johnsen

Board President: Jill Watson

RE Coordinator: Monique McAuliffe

Choir Director: Bridget Convey

Contact information for Committee chairs and other leaders can be found in the UUCC directory or obtained by contacting the Office Administrator.

Office Administrator: Lynn Smith
Phone: (207)622-3232 or email: admin@augustauu.org

Office hours: 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. (Tues, Wed & Thurs)
No office hours: Monday or Friday

Rev. Carie's Office Hours:

Monday	off
Tuesday	1:00 – 6:00
Wednesday	2:00 – 6:00
Thursday	Writing Day

Other times and days available by appointment.

Monday is Rev. Carie's Sabbath. She does not attend to emails, phone calls or meetings. For pastoral emergencies please call her cell phone (508) 221-5295. She will return your call as soon as possible.